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ABSTRACT

Issues clarification, skills and techniques, and methods and strategy in Extension public policy education were the themes of the conference. The first keynote speaker, R.J. Hildreth, justified public policy education by home economist and community resource development educators. The second keynote speaker, J.B. Wyckoff, described the function of and skills necessary for effective Extension education. He also noted how to define issues, determine Extension involvement, and select appropriate audiences for effective public policy education programs. Participants then joined small groups to discuss the constraints facing Extension educators and alternatives for overcoming those constraints. Cecelia M. Roland described essential skills and techniques for the public policy educator including methods of conflict resolution and goal setting in a group context. Keynote speaker Wyckoff described a model to help Extension educators intervene in the public policy process and examined the issue of academic training for public policy extension work. Representatives of four states presented examples of public policy programs in housing, consumer sounding boards, small and part-time farming, and food policy. Finally, participants joined one of five issue study groups (energy, citizen participation, housing, land use, family related issues) to define and develop appropriate educational programs. (SB)

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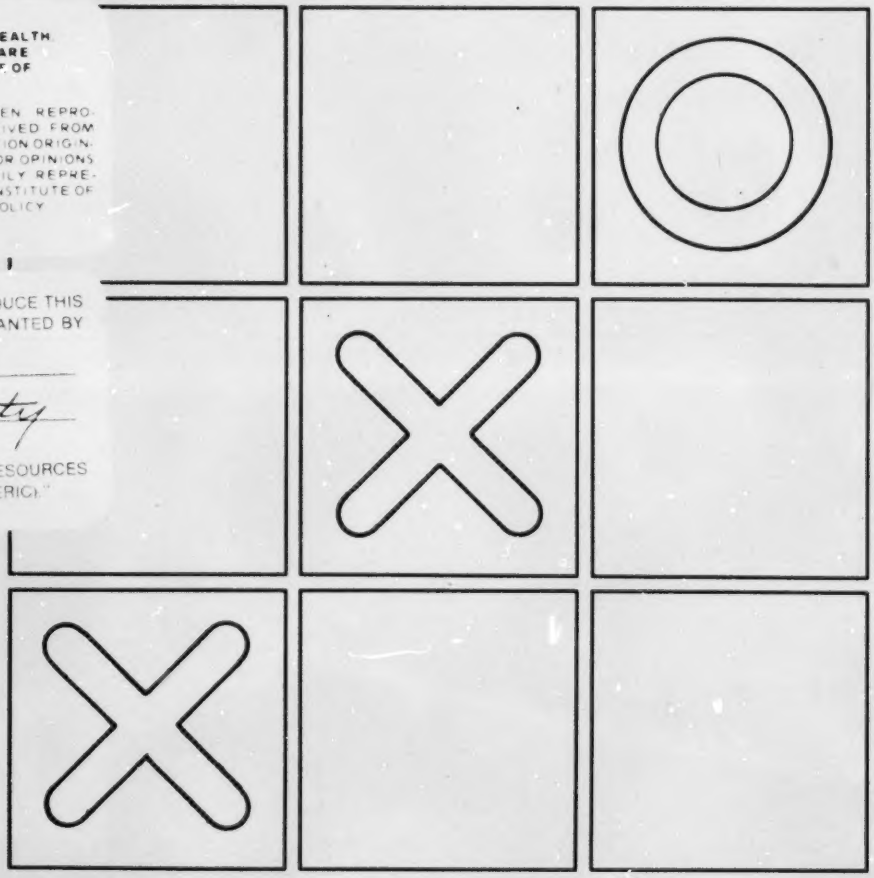

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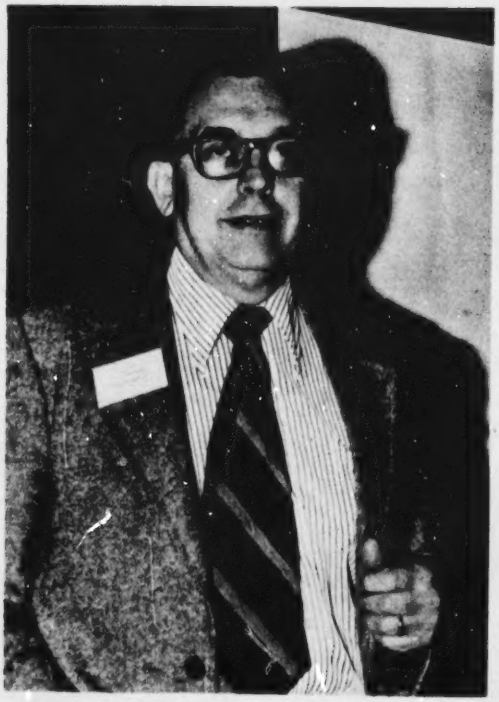
THE GOALS OF THIS CONFERENCE for all agents attending are an increase in confidence, additional skills, competence in public policy and the ability to follow through. . . . Anne Rideout (CT)



TO DO PUBLIC POLICY -- Use data, cooperate with all organizations, avoid passing resolutions, use layman's language.

. . . R.J. Hildreth

WHY DO PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION?

R. J. Hildreth
Farm Foundation

Thomas Jefferson, in a September 28, 1820 letter to William Charles Jarvis, said: "I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlighted enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but inform their discretion by education."

Jefferson and others who wrote the rules for our political system put the ultimate political power with citizens. All political power of elected or appointed officials is derived from the citizen. Most citizens seldom exercise their ultimate political power. Thus, some citizens have more influence than others because they become a part of an attentive public and those citizens who are elected or appointed do have more power on a specific issue because of their attention to the issue and position.

However, the ultimate political power rests with the citizens especially when they decide to use it, as two recent presidents of the United States discovered. When a sufficient number of citizens (not all) leaned in the same direction, one found he had to resign and the other could not retain his most trusted advisor. Thus, both Jefferson and I think it is important for citizens to have the opportunity for education to "inform their discretion" about public policy issues. The question of why home economics and CRD educators should do public policy education is now given attention.

Reasons for Public Policy Education

1. All education, in one way or another, involves public policy issues. This statement has become more clear in recent years. Many of the topics which used to be considered objective technical subject matter are now policy issues. That is, laws are proposed or passed about these issues. Education on topics in food and nutrition, housing, child care, safety of household equipment and fabrics, local government and land use are but a few examples.

Unless carefully done, the presentation of information about the benefits or lack of benefits of eating meat or land use planning is viewed as favoring one public policy over another.

Public policy processes involve more than controversy. Predictions of consequences are very important and often involve scientific knowledge. But with controversy, formerly objective statements are perceived as taking sides on a policy issue. Thus, whether you want to be in public policy education or not, you are.

2. Given the reality of the statement above, it follows that without a policy approach to education, you stand to lose your effectiveness as an educator in your subject matter. The public policy education approach will be discussed later, but let me simply say it involves the definition of issues, a statement of alternative solutions to the issues, and a statement of the consequences of each of the alternatives. It does not, I repeat, NOT, involve the best solution to the issue. When your students disagree about an issue, the best way to maintain your effectiveness is to use the approach of issues, alternatives and consequences.

Let me give an example from another country. I was speaking with an official of the Agriculture Advisory Service of the United Kingdom several years ago. The United Kingdom Ministry of Agriculture made the decision that they were going to promote increased beef production as a government policy. The United Kingdom Agriculture Advisory Service promoted increased beef production by providing education on beef production and marketing and urging increased production. But two things happened. The beef cycles in the major beef production countries in the world synchronized and the United Kingdom joined the Common Market. The price of beef in the United Kingdom went down a great deal. The agricultural advisory officer to whom I was speaking indicated that the education objectivity of the United Kingdom Agriculture Advisory Service was perceived as very low by farmers as a result.

Bringing the issue closer to home, consider your effectiveness if you suggest that increasing amounts of beef should be eaten in order to improve iron intake. The people concerned about cholestrol or using large amounts of grain to feed beef will not find your statement objective.

3. The above two reasons are very pragmatic. The next reason is important for our nation. The basis of the U.S. political system, indeed our culture, is an informed citizenry. Public policy education is an important means to informed citizenry. Extension education is a significant, but not the only, way for citizens to obtain information on policy issues, alternatives and consequences. It is my judgment that you and your Extension Service should do your part.

4. Public policy education will stimulate the interest and participation of the citizen in policy decisions. I believe that an involved citizenry leads to a better government, and thus to a better nation. Involvement without knowledge may be useless, indeed dangerous. Public policy education provides this knowledge.

Public policy education in Extension in the United States developed largely out of the work of agricultural policy concerns. Economists have taken the leadership in public policy education. I wish to make it very clear that you do not have to be an economist to do public policy education. Not all policy issues are primarily economic in nature. Many of them require the scientific information and analytical framework you possess in order to clearly specify the issues, alternatives and consequences. Many public policy issues do involve economics, thus the economist has a significant role to play. For the non-economist policy educator, the trick is to be able to know when you can go without an economist and when you need an economist.

Political Action System

I should like now to turn to the nature of political decision making. I use a framework developed by the father of Peter Schickle (of PDQ Bach fame). Peter's father, Rainer, is a distinguished agricultural economist, and in the '50s wrote a book on policy (Agricultural Policy: Farm Programs and National Welfare by Rainer Schickle, McGraw-Hill, 1954). In it he specified a political action system. (Figure 1) In the action system, the actor pursues an end by choosing among appropriate means subject to conditions.

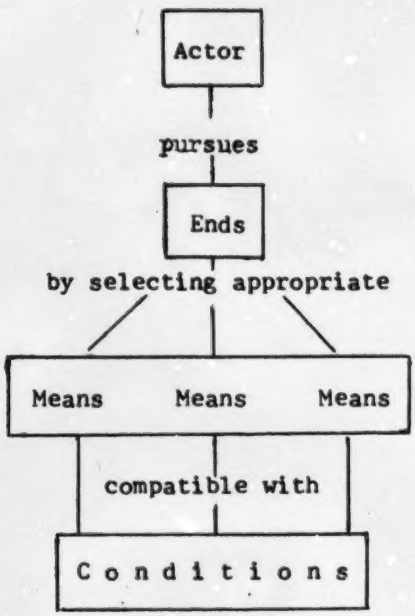


Figure 1. Diagram of an Action System

Who are actors? The actor may be the legislature. It may be the individual legislators. It may be the governor, the president or a member of the administration.

It may be the organization or person who wishes to influence legislation. The ends or objectives of policy have to be reasonably well defined. There is almost always more than one appropriate means. So choice is a part of the policy process. And the whole process takes place within the context of social, political and economic conditions which set the context for action.

It has occurred to me recently that changing conditions predict policy action, better than changes in actors, changes in ends or changes in means. The ends change slowly. Consider the preambles and objectives of the various agriculture acts and there is a striking similarity from the 1930s to date. The means change only slowly over time. The behavior of actors is constrained by means and conditions. So it is changes in the conditions that explain and predict action systems more than any other factor.

It is the change in conditions about food and nutrition, housing, safety of household equipment and fabrics, local government and land use that have made what used to be straight forward objective Extension education on these topics a part of the policy process, and thus, controversial. I need not explain to you how people are more sensitive and concerned about aspects of these problems; you have experienced it yourself. One implication of the continuing change in conditions is that your policy lesson plans are probably not good for over a decade, if that long.

Values and Public Policy

In making policy decisions, values of the actors in the political action system and the citizen play an important role. Values are those principles by which people live and grow out of their cultural, social, economic, moral and spiritual background. In a democracy we maintain that each individual has a right to his values. I illustrate the role of values in public policy education with a rather simple paradigm, Figure 2.

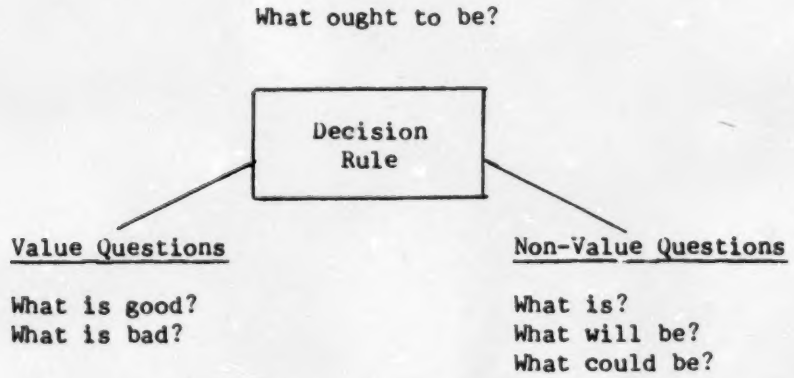


Figure 2. Role of Value and Non-Value Questions

The first set of questions involves values. The second set involves prediction and explanation of reality. Scientific and technical information is useful for these questions. The important thing is that the answer to the question "What ought to be?" involves dealing with both sets of questions.

Different citizens hold different values with different strengths. The depth of scientific and technological knowledge varies among people. Thus opportunities exist in public policy education to deal with both kinds of questions. The educator who assumes that all answers to the question "What ought to be?" will come from values is just as foolish as the educator who tries to deal with the answer to the question "What ought to be?" from the point of view of technical information.

This reality again illustrates the usefulness of the issues, alternatives and consequences framework. Where the educator uses this framework, the question "What ought to be?" is not answered by the educator. The educator can point out consequences of the alternatives and measure them against various value positions while using scientific information to predict consequences. The real danger is to ignore either value questions or scientific questions in public policy education.

Some Advice

J. Carroll Bottum, one of the "deans of policy education," made the following comments on public policy education. I think they constitute good advice:

1. Fundamental issues should be selected and temporary unimportant problems should be avoided regardless of interest.

2. Data should be used at critical points as far as possible. The presentation then becomes a demonstration subject to analysis by the group rather than a personal statement by the individual presenting the situation.

3. Cooperate with all organizations, but keep open a channel of education directly to the people. This is the function of education which is different than the function of crystallizing opinions which the pressure organizations are set up to do.

4. Avoid educational groups passing resolutions or taking action as a group by which they step over into the field of the pressure organizations.

5. Discussions and presentations must be put in layman's language if specialists' contributions are going to be effective.

One last small statement: It is obvious that there is no workable state of complete objectivity. The choice of a problem for an education program or the style of education to be used is seldom objectively determined. I subjectively prefer the style of being as objective as possible. The reason for choosing this style is pragmatic. It enables me to deal with an issue involving policy and controversy so that I can come back and educate on another issue.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Following Jim Hildreth's talk, he fielded questions from the audience. A summary follows.

Q. Are you saying we should avoid groups taking stands on issues?

A. Keep groups you organize from passing resolutions as these groups serve an educational role different from that of pressure groups.

Q. As educators do we avoid pressure groups?

A. You can play a role as an educator. If that group takes a stand, O.K. But at your own meetings, avoid resolutions. Let people from your meetings go back to their groups and pass resolutions if they want to. We do want people to become involved.

Q. Doesn't that rule out working with advocates?

A. Absolutely not. The object of the game is to get people in action but with a background of information. We've got to show how delightful the action is.

Q. You said, "Don't deal with 'fluff' interests of the people." But shouldn't we deal with them where they are?

A. You have to help people separate the fluff from the fundamentals. Work with what excites them and lead them into the fundamental underlying problem. Some citizen groups don't know where their interest really is. But what Extension needs more than anything else is scholarship -- the ability to see underneath the surface of public policy problems. I'm defining scholarship as the ability to think clearly and communicate ideas with the people. Extension's got a lot of scholarship available.

Q. What's the proper time to get involved in public policy?

A. There's a teachable moment -- it's well before the issue is white hot.

Q. What's the difference between CRD and public policy?

A. There's no fundamental difference, but public policy tends to focus on legislation originating at the state and national levels while CRD focuses at the local level. Extension agents need to be pragmatic for their educational role, but also practical for the people.

Q. I don't like the idea of public policy only at the state and federal levels. Would you comment.

A. Public policy can happen at the local level, but state government writes the rules for the towns which is why I said state.

Q. Conditions affecting public policy vary according to the issue. Don't we have to work at all levels of government?

A. Yes, depending on the issues and concerns. You can't be all things to all people at the same time. But we do need knowledgeable citizens. Extension works on all levels. Extension has programs and citizens have problems. The action doesn't set the rules. Sometimes it's best to work at the local level, sometimes at the state.

Q. Is CRD a sub-part of public policy or vice versa?

A. It doesn't make that much difference. Who cares?

THE FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION are to provide factual, relevant information, to teach concepts that facilitate analysis and to provide understanding and skills for participating in the democratic process.

. . . J.B. Wyckoff

CLARIFICATION OF PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION -- APPROPRIATE ISSUES FOR THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICES

J. B. Wyckoff
Extension Economist, Public Policy
Oregon State University

"Democracy by definition means rule by the people. When functioning properly, democracy provides orderly processes by which the public can develop policies. This is accomplished through open discussion and compromise to achieve policies based on the reasonable wishes of the majority while respecting the legitimate rights of the minority. Policies are implemented through governmental processes. Public services are provided; costs and benefits are distributed among people; and businesses and personal behavior are guided and regulated."

So reads the opening paragraph of a new ECOP publication, Public Policy Education.[1] This concept of democracy derives from a general philosophy traced back to Plato in ancient Greece. More recently, Thomas Jefferson restated the philosophy that democracy could only function if the average citizen was fully informed and had a voice in major governmental policy decisions. He had faith that the average citizen would be sufficiently motivated to become informed and to exercise judgment in guiding a functioning democracy. This philosophy provides the underpinning for our educational work in public policy in the Cooperative Extension Service.

Jim Shaffer has pointed out that democratic government is a rare event in the history of the world.[2] He emphasizes that it must be constantly attended to, or it will be lost. Only well informed participating citizens can maintain a government of, for and by the people. Still, virtually every survey conducted reveals an appalling lack of understanding of basic policy issues among our citizens. Further, less than half of our citizens normally turn out to vote, even in national elections, and a recent school budget election in my home town brought out only 12 percent of the voters, even though over 80 percent of the locally raised revenues were involved. Thus, it would seem that most citizens perceive that the immediate reward for acquiring information and participating in public policy decisions is relatively small. The incentive to be a "free rider," to accept the benefits of effective and responsible government but invest very little in the process, seems to be strong.

The Land Grant University System

Perhaps our forefathers, in their wisdom, recognized the potential for such a problem in their rationale for establishing the land grant university system. This educational system was created in the belief that education can and should make important contributions toward improving human welfare. They charged this university system with the responsibility to provide all people, rural and urban, with knowledge to help them solve their social, economic and political, as well as technological, problems. This institutional obligation extends to people as individuals, as members of interest groups in communities and as related to the development of their society.

If the land grant university system is to fulfill its responsibility to the people in public policy education, it must commit sufficient resources to research and Extension programs to:

1. Enlarge the body of proved, significant, scientific knowledge related to local, state and national public problems.

2. Utilize the appropriate capabilities of the total university in responding to such problems.

3. Develop a closer association with people concerned about problems at the local, county, state or federal level including opinion leaders, legitimizers, interest groups, elected representatives, appointed officials and the general public.

4. Be thorough and objective in defining problems, identifying alternative courses of action, analyzing the consequences of each alternative and increasing citizens' understanding of public policy issues.

The Cooperative Extension Service

We are concerned here with the mission of the Cooperative Extension Service in the area of public policy education. Within its educational mission, the Extension Service, with the land grant university, has a major responsibility for planning and conducting public policy education programs. These programs should be conducted on public issues as they arise, even though they may be quite controversial. Further, the programs should be conducted for urban citizens, low income and minority groups, consumers, environmentalists and Extension's traditional rural clientele.

As pointed out in the 1948 Joint Committee Report on Extension Programs, Policies and Goals, the land grant universities and the Extension Service have a moral obligation to conduct meaningful, effective programs in the area of public policy.

Merely disseminating facts about conditions at a particular time is not sufficient. The objective of such programs must be " . . . development of people themselves to the end that they, through their own initiative, may effectively identify and solve the various problems directly affecting their welfare."[3]

At the same time, we must keep in mind, as stated in the Scope Report of 1958, ". . . it should be crystal clear that Extension's function is not policy determination. Rather, its function is to better equip the people it serves, through educational processes, to analyze issues involved on the basis of all available facts. It is the perogative and responsibility of people themselves, individually or collectively, to make their own decisions on policy issues and express them as they see fit."[4]

Extension Public Policy Education

The rising interest in public policy education among all segments of the Extension Service derives from the fact that it is presently virtually impossible to find any program area of Extension education that does not involve policy issues. Many agents and specialists, in the past, have been able to meet their clientele and present them with prescriptions. This program format is less and less appropriate as questions are raised concerning first and second order impacts on human health, safety and welfare or on general environmental quality. This change is perhaps occurring because of the rising awareness within the general public of the impacts of private decisions upon the general welfare. These "externalities" have led to public intervention in areas that have been considered the perogative of individual decision makers in the past.

Extension as an Intervener

This is why the function of the Extension Service as an intervener in public policy issues must be strictly for the purpose of education. By their very nature, public policy issues arise because someone or some group within society is not achieving their expectations within the institutional framework. They perceive that there is an imbalance in how the resources are being allocated within society to meet needs.

Since the allocation of resources is generally accomplished according to the desires of those "in power," some tradeoff is usually indicated. When these tradeoffs occur, there are usually gainers and losers, and the net gain and loss is difficult to determine because it requires interpersonal comparisons for which we have no adequate measure at the present time. Also, the public policy educator becomes, by definition, a part of the political process and thus subject to political pressure. To escape unscathed from this process, one must stick totally to the educational function.

Extension Public Policy Methodology

This requires an understanding of the basic methodology followed by virtually all public policy educators. Simply stated, it involves:

1. Selecting and clearly defining an issue.

2. Listing the goals, values and objectives that groups within society wish to attain in solving the problem.

3. Developing a wide range of alternative solutions designed to solve the problem.

4. Exploring the consequences and impacts of each of the alternative solutions, together with determining the distribution of the related costs and benefits across the population.

5. Leaving the final policy decision to the people.

Within this educational framework, it should be recognized that even with full information and a complete analysis of alternative solutions an optimum solution may not be selected for a given issue. This may occur because widely diverse individual preferences exist within the decision making body or because some segment of the existing political power base or community power structure is in a position to block an optimum solution. The power structure may be more interested in selecting a solution that is more meaningful in maintaining their present position of influence. It also has been observed that an "inverted ethic" sometimes exists where the majority of the decision making public refuses to support an optimum solution even though they think it is personally desirable because benefits will accrue to persons or groups not regarded as deserving.

In any case, there is virtually never a single "best" solution to a public policy issue. This is why an adversary approach in public policy is seldom satisfactory. To debate whether to adopt "the solution," effectively rules out all other alternatives, some of which may be as desirable as the one being debated.

Objectivity

The Extension educator, to be effective in programs utilizing this methodology, must at all times retain an objectivity which is perceived by everyone concerned with the issue. Objectivity in this context means avoiding advocacy of any of the available policy options. There are those such as James Laue who hold that ". . . education is primarily and always a value-laden process and that educators (whatever their base or ideology) are neither neutral nor value-free -- but rather represent one set of values among many being presented to their clients."[5]

As such, he suggests that ". . . the basic ideology of Extension is that persons ought to solve problems through a factually based democratic process, and this process can be aided by Extension workers playing roles as objective educators."[6] He would include these values from such an ideology:

1. Knowledge and skills are better than ignorance and incompetence in problem solving.

2. "Rationality" is more helpful in problem solving than "emotion."

3. The provision of information to persons facing problems will facilitate rational choices among alternatives.

4. The best way for Extension to facilitate the democratic process and good problem solving is by providing objective information to decision makers.[7]

Even within this set of values there is a possibility that the democratic process will not be enhanced. Laue says ". . . the democratic process does not work properly unless all groups with a stake in the outcome have sufficient power to represent their own rights in the process."[8] This is one of the challenges that Extension educators have to meet head on in order to achieve the perceived objectivity that is necessary for the success of public policy education programs.

It is important to recognize that the "reality" of a situation is not nearly as important as the "perceptions" held by the people involved. This is because perception is, indeed, reality to these people. A successful educational program may bring peoples' perceptions closer to the possible alternatives.

Public policy educators do not make policy decisions for the people. They generally perform four functions in the public policy education process, those of:

- Contributing factual information relevant to the situation or issue.

- Teaching concepts to facilitate analysis of the issue or policies.

- Providing understanding and skills that facilitate effective participation in the democratic process.

- Contributing to experiences that lead to evaluation of values, beliefs and perceptions relevant for considering policy.

Issue Definition

Helping a concerned group of citizens define a public policy issue is often the most important act influencing the success of a public policy education program. Our colleague Austin Bennett from the University of Maine has described a technique that is very helpful to many specialists. When working with a group, he first poses the question, "What is the problem?"

In the discussion that follows, it is usually possible to sort out symptoms that often initially are discerned to be the problem and to focus in on the real issue of concern. He then asks a second question, "Why is it a problem?"

This leads the group to analyze the situation and the inter-relating factors that are creating the concern. After the group carefully analyzes this situation, he poses a third question. "To whom is it a problem"?

The ensuing discussion is often useful in identifying the audience towards whom an educational program might appropriately be aimed. It is necessary to identify those who are concerned, including those bearing the cost of the defined problem, those who stand to gain the benefits from at least one of the alternative solutions and those components of the existing power structure that are threatened by either the problem or a solution. This emphasizes a very important point -- that the potential public policy educators need to understand the total community within which they are working.

Determining Extension Involvement

The key to successful public policy education is deciding whether and when to become involved in an educational program around a given issue. Public policy educators must be sufficiently close to the public to discern whether people are concerned about the issue and whether it is perceived to be important. They then must determine whether the timing is right to conduct an effective program. Half-hearted, under-financed, limited efforts are not only likely to be ineffective but may damage the credibility of the Extension Service. Effective public policy programs are those:

- That are developed around significant issues.
- Where effective Extension educational efforts can make a difference.
- Where sufficient resources are available to provide quality analysis to reach target audiences and to operate over a sufficiently long time in solving the problem.

While it is always desirable to postpone educational programs on public policy issues until all the relevant facts are available, this delay often is not realistic. In many cases, the decision makers are faced with an immediate decision and need to be appraised of alternative solutions to their problem, even if the alternatives have not been tested and lie beyond the bounds of empirical evidence. The training and experience of a public policy educator will help decision makers think through the possible outcomes of such policy alternatives.

The technical knowledge needed to adequately analyze the consequences, impacts and distribution of the impacts of the various alternatives, across the population, often rests largely beyond the expertise of the Extension educator. Extension is only one of many agencies involved in public policy education. Thus, the expertise needed may well exist in the ESCS-USDA, experiment stations, academic departments and schools outside of the college of agriculture, other colleges and universities or in groups interested in public affairs such as the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women.

Audience Selection

Selecting the appropriate audience is another important element affecting the effectiveness of a public policy education program. In some cases, the educator appropriately may concentrate on an audience of informed but powerful people variously referred to as opinion leaders, legitimizers or key influentials. While these leaders may not necessarily hold public office or have administrative responsibility for any particular interest group or organization, they still are respected by their peers, held in high esteem for their knowledge, wisdom, sound judgment and sensitivity to other people's needs and values and, therefore, can influence decision making.

Most Extension educators are responsible for leadership training, both within the Extension Service and with the general public. Thus, potential leaders may be the target audience in a given case. The developing leadership, in turn, can work with broader audiences and the general public. Experienced public policy specialists, however, will not sacrifice ongoing educational activities aimed at helping the general public become more effective citizens.

Establishing an educational climate that includes open communication, mutual respect and a common ground for agreement such as a statement of the problem and the identification of common goals is a necessary program prerequisite. The opportunity must exist for each individual to exert influence, explain values, state positions and teach and learn from others. The presence of information needed for productive discussion of an issue must exist for successful educational programs on public policy issues.

Personal Characteristics for Policy Education

Because of the emergence of policy issues in virtually every program area with Extension, it is helpful to potential Extension policy educators to assess their own personal characteristics relative to their chances of success. Essentially, Extension specialists can be affective in public policy education provided they:

- Are able to relate to people who are trying to solve public problems.
- Believe in the democratic process.
- Respect the goals, values, beliefs and attitudes of various clientele.
- Understand group dynamics and the principles of adult education.
- Are willing to accept the educator role and not be an advocate.
- Are able to identify and clarify emerging public problems and issues and avoid becoming spread too thin.
- Are able to discern the teachable moment related to public issues.
- Keep university administrators informed on emerging issues and proposed educational programs.
- Can develop viable alternatives for solving public problems.
- Are competent in subject matter relevant to an issue or can identify and obtain access to other resources.
- Can develop procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of public policy education programs.

On this latter point, Jim Hildreth once asked me how I evaluated the effectiveness of my public policy programs. After considering this for some time, my answer was that it depends upon how the target audience responds when they are faced with a new public policy issue. If, at that time, they are able to carefully define the issue, develop alternatives, use the framework of assessing impacts and the distribution of those impacts, then I have been successful in my public policy education. In this case, the contact with the Extension specialist by the group will be a plea for factual information and technical resources to help in the implementation of the policy process. This is the ultimate test.

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ISSUES CLARIFICATION

Emory Brown
Assistant Director for Programs
The Pennsylvania State University

Following the two keynote addresses, the conference attendees formed small groups to discuss these two questions:

1. What are the constraints you face in conducting Extension public policy education programs?

2. What are the alternatives for overcoming these constraints?

Constraints

Many of the problems troubling delegates about public policy education surfaced in the group discussion. The following is a summary of major constraints reported.

- A feeling of lack of adequate skills and competencies of Extension staff.
- Ambiguous administrative support or perceived lack of administrative support.
- Inadequate subject matter resource base or lack of research knowledge to deal with issues.
- Difficulties in working cooperatively with other organizations or agencies or in forming system linkages.
- Expectations of traditional Extension clientele which are at variance with public policy education expectations.
- Difficulty in evaluating outcomes or results of public policy education.

Alternatives

The group listed the following alternative solutions to deal with constraints:

1. Provide professional development opportunities for staff to increase the level of competence, to help them become educators rather than knowledge dispensers, to help them become willing to take risks in educational programs and to help them evaluate outcomes of public policy education progress.

2. Increase skills of staff in setting priorities to give more time to public policy education.

3. Offer clear administration support for public policy education and provide incentives to staff for carrying out these programs.

4. Support initiation of new research to focus on significant public policy issues and help identify relevant, scientific knowledge about public issues.

5. Establish effective relationships with other organizations and agencies where roles are clearly defined and efforts are mutually reinforcing.

6. Extend clientele and lay groundwork for changing the expectations of Extension programs.

WE NEED TO THINK of other ways to reach people besides meetings.

. . . Cecelia Roland

SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES IN PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION

Cecelia M. Roland
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Our first premise in successful group interaction is that planning begins by involving others. Yet sometimes we hesitate to involve other people in that process. Why?

First, most of us are resistant to change. It's always easier to do things as we have done them before. A second reason, and probably a deeper, more subconscious reason for resisting the involvement of others, is that involving others can mean a loss of personal control in a given situation. This may be seen as a threat to our power base.

If we do accept the theory that Two Heads Are Better Than One, then we know that the benefits of involving others in planning outweigh the risks.

Some of these benefits are:

- Involving others gives them the opportunity to learn more about our organization and to have them perceive it as a capable agency willing to work with others in solving issue related problems.
- Change is inevitable. By working with others we can have more input into change and help it take place in a constructive framework.
- We implement the Extension philosophy -- assisting others to use knowledge to create change.

If we accept the need to work with groups in public policy education programs, then it seems logical that we recognize the need for the public policy educator to have certain skills. These would include:

- understanding of group dynamics

- ability to relate well to other individuals
- understanding of adult education methodology
- knowledge and practice of techniques of conflict resolution
- tolerance and respect for values, beliefs and concerns of audiences

Needs of Individuals

As we talk about this respect for the values and beliefs of others, it might be well to review what we learned about the two kinds of needs of individuals: (a) primary -- inborn, related to physical survival, and (b) secondary -- learned, related to social structure. Individuals satisfy these needs on a priority basis, usually ranking primary needs first, then satisfying secondary needs.

Let's review Maslow's Pyramid of Needs:

Self-fulfillment	(realization of individual potential for creativity, goodness)
Esteem	(respect by others)
Social	(friendship, approval, love)
Safety	(security and protection)
Physical	(food, clothing, shelter)

As we work with groups of individuals, it is important for us to recognize that these needs must be satisfied to assure that the group will function successfully enough to achieve its goals.

We also recognize that individuals within a planning body function as representatives of other groups which also have special needs. These in Maslow's terms are: (a) safety -- need to protect own group from loss of status, funding, territory; (b) social -- need to project positive image of our group and its function; and (c) recognition -- need to acknowledge group's contribution and value to society.

It is important that public policy educators in their role as group leaders recognize and satisfy this variety of needs.

When discussing interagency strategies, we need to consider several other guidelines.

- Realize that mistrust may exist.
- Realize that existing commitments to other priorities exist.
- Be realistic about what can be accomplished. Start cooperative efforts with a task that probably will succeed.
- Don't demand total agreement and participation.
- Don't identify conflict as evil. Be willing to discuss openly issues of disagreement.
- Be open in discussing needs for individual survival and what must be accomplished toward group goals -- work for recognition for all.
- Involve others in decision making process.
- Emphasize mutual similarities, dependence, similar group goals. Be willing to work as hard for others' goals as you expect them to work for yours, or only work on common goal projects.
- Have no permanent friends and no permanent enemies among the organizations making up the group.

Dealing with Conflict

Because of differing needs in group situations, conflict may arise. Many individuals fear conflict, feeling that it is a negative happening. It depends on how it is handled within the group; conflict can have some positive effects.

Conflict usually occurs when an individual perceives a situation as threatening. The threat may be to personal goals, values, policy decisions or what we perceive as territory. It is important for us to realize that when conflict first occurs, many of us experience confusion or role dilemma. We may try out several kinds of behavior to find the one which we think will work best in a particular situation. A skillful third party conflict manager often can avert real disaster if he can act at this point to reduce the level of conflict within the group before behavior patterns become rigid.

Ways of behaving in conflict situations:

1. withdrawal
2. aggression -- creates energy which can be channelled into accomplishment
3. new behavior -- tension may force individuals to change

Third party managers can reduce conflict in a variety of ways:

1. Be alert to recognize symptoms of conflict.

2. Encourage group to recognize and discuss certain situations that could be sources of conflict. Give them time to think about how these conflicts can be resolved.

3. When conflict does occur, help individuals to express their feelings and concerns. When people tell how they feel, it helps them identify problems and put the problems in perspective.

4. Help the group identify what the problem really is. Once it is known, changes may not be difficult to make.

5. Keep the group communicating. Be a good listener. Understand that often listening to individuals and recognizing their feelings is enough. Most people don't expect to get their own way all the time.

6. Get the facts from all concerned. Break the issue into small pieces. Get agreement on each section. Take time to solve the problem.

Conflict often occurs when the group is pressed for time and must make hurried decisions.

Goal Setting

I would like to move to goal setting as I think this is another important area in working with groups -- trying to set a goal for the group. We talked about the fact that goals should be realistic and achievable. Goals need to be clear enough so that the group knows what it is going to do.

Groups that have a specific, agreed upon goal will function more effectively and will accomplish a great deal more than groups where goals are not clearly defined. If the group can agree on a goal, even if they spend a little extra time defining what it is that they really want to do and what is important in doing this, they will have a better chance of achieving the goal.

The process of goal setting is usually nonthreatening or at least a process where all people can participate. Remember, we said to start with tasks that can be handled without a great deal of threat. The goals need to be clear, they need to be specific, and yet they have to leave room for a variety of needs. As the group comes to some kind of an agreement on goals, they begin to function as a group.

One way to set goals that are nonthreatening might be for the group to decide its goal is to acquire information about the issue. Another goal might be to share that knowledge with the community. That gives a group a great deal of flexibility.

There are many tasks that the group can undertake within the framework of these goals. It specifies that information and knowledge should be gained. It doesn't say what information. It doesn't specify in which way the individuals are going to share this knowledge and information. Those are broad goals.

When we think about this in terms of activities to implement the goal, then we begin to think about: do we have a public meeting; do we carry on a public service campaign on radio stations; how do we implement this? But the goals should be broad enough to give us a lot of perspective.

Now as the group becomes better acquainted, it becomes possible to be more specific about the goals. Remember, goals should be acceptable to everyone in the group. They should be achievable by the group. They shouldn't involve too high an element of risk for any group member. And they should be goals that will give the group a positive sense of accomplishment when achieved. The group has to feel that they have done something, so make goals positive ones.

It's Not Easy

Goal setting is not easy. We all know that what can seem like a simple task can be a very difficult job. Going through the process here, we gained a better appreciation for just how hard goal setting is. Goal setting calls for involving others.

I was quite surprised a few weeks ago to read in the history of the National Association of Extension Home Economists about a speech made to our organization in 1944 by Lloyd Simons, then National Director of Extension. He said that home economists are going to have to change their perception of their job. They have looked upon themselves as teachers of skills, and it is about time that they begin to look upon themselves as teachers of concepts.

This has proven true of home economics as a profession. And I think it is also true of Extension as a profession. As we begin to look upon ourselves as teachers of concepts, we need to understand the importance of involving others in the decision making process of program planning.

METHODS AND STRATEGY
IN EXTENSION PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION

J. B. Wyckoff
Extension Economist, Public Policy
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In our complex, industrialized society, the scope and variety of private actions that affect other people may need to be regulated for the general welfare. The necessary public control is accomplished through laws, institutions and programs designed and administered to influence private acts to secure desired consequences. Public policies establish the parameters for our laws, institutions and programs.

A public policy is a settled course of action adopted and followed by appropriate officials of a unit or representative government to solve problems and achieve certain public objectives. Public policy can be established by units of government in addition to that at the national level. State and local governments deal with problems of raising revenue to provide public services, land use controls and controlling crime, among others.

Citizen concern about such issues creates a demand for corrective action. This demand is translated through an expressed need for educational programs designed to help people understand the available alternatives. Such programs can help individuals develop their competence and confidence in solving public problems. Effective demand for public policy education comes when citizens' concern prompts them to spend their scarce time and money to improve their ability to cope with perceived problems.

Again, the basic methodology followed by virtually all public policy educators involves:

1. Selecting and clearly defining an issue.

2. Listing the goals, values and objectives that groups within the society wish to attain in solving the problem.

3. Developing a wide range of alternative solutions designed to solve the problem.

p. 27 deleted - non captioned photos

4. Exploring the consequences and impacts of each of the alternatives, together with determining distribution of the related costs and benefits across the population.

5. Leaving the final policy decision to the people.

Solving public policy problems involves debate, compromise and consent. Well planned, objective, educational programs can help reduce tension and identify an acceptable basis for resolving differences.

A Model for Public Policy Education

A useful, educational model has been developed to help Extension educators intervene in the public policy process.[1] The issue cycle model was developed by Charles Gratto and presented to the National Public Policy Education Conference in 1973. Its major components are as follows (diagrammed in Figure 1).

1. People become disturbed by some condition. The concern, tension or anxiety aroused by the condition causes people to search for some sort of relief.

2. The search for relief generates discussion that gives the issue a name and defines it in action terms. At this stage, the issue is not defined very scientifically. Information about the problem may consist largely of folk knowledge. Some real or imagined adversary is often singled out.

3. The cutting edge of the issue clashes with the realities of budget making, resource limitations or the interests of those who are either neutral or antagonistic towards those with the problem. When the clash of interests is of sufficient magnitude, debate on priorities ensues.

4. The debate forces a ranking of priorities and sets the stage for the resolution of the issue.

5. During debate, participants are led to a more realistic view of the problem. More objective and scientific knowledge comes into play. The structure of the problem is seen more clearly. While value judgments may converge only slightly, objective views usually do converge. The stock of available knowledge is augmented by research, or at least existing scientific knowledge is carefully organized and applied.

6. Alternatives are considered, and the effects of each are laid out. Participants weigh the effects of alternatives on a complex scale having many social, political and economic dimensions.

7. A public choice is made.

8. Action follows. Action may imply change, or it may be simply a continuation of the status quo on a more informed basis.

9. Action is evaluated; its effects are measured. If people are "satisfied" with the action, the issue recedes. If they are not "satisfied," the cycle resumes and the process continues until the issue finally is resolved.

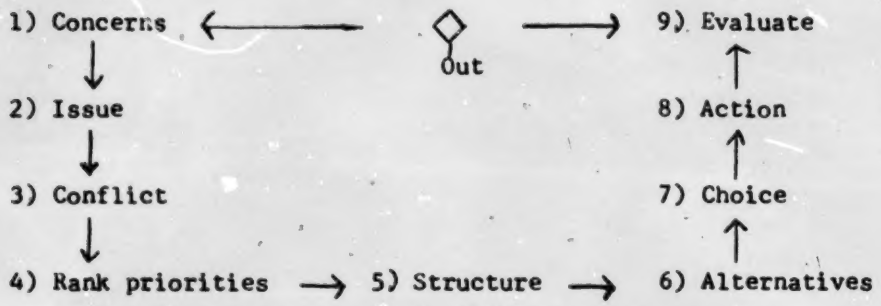

Figure 1. Issue Cycle Flow Chart

When it is decided that a public policy education program is in order concerning a particular issue, a second cycle is set up. This is termed the intervention cycle. It consists of four cells:

1. preparation
2. resources
3. program delivery
4. evaluation

The cell definitions are quite straightforward. The preparation cell contains those activities that are required to initiate a program. These include planning, studying and preparing the first versions of teaching materials. The resource cell has to do with the accumulation and deployment of teaching resources -- teacher time, space, travel, materials and coordination of program effort.

The program cell includes all of the learning activities that impinge on the issue cycle. A partial listing of activities might include personal contact, conferences, fairs and exhibits, radio and television, meetings, short courses, workshops, seminars and written communications ranging from leaflets through monographs. (See Figure 2 for a correlation of the issue cycle with the intervention cycle.)

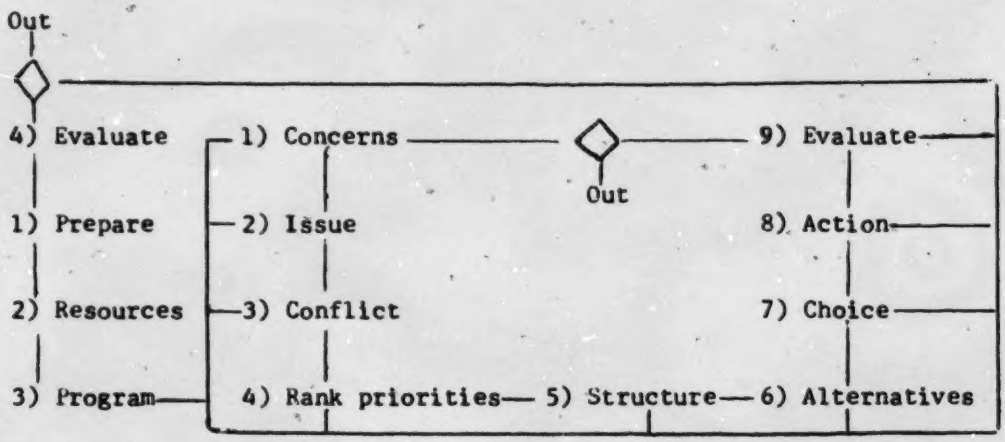

Figure 2. Issue Cycle with Intervention Cycle

The evaluation cell includes activities designed to measure the effectiveness or the impact of the program.

Gratto distinguishes between client-oriented programs and issue-oriented programs. In the former, intervention may occur in any of the cells from one through seven. In any case, the programs are designed for and in conjunction with a narrowly defined clientele group.

In issue-oriented programming, the problem occurs, the issue is defined and the programs are designed to serve all people who are concerned at a particular point in the issue cycle. In this case, the issue is selected first and the selection of the clients follows. Gratto feels that, "A client-oriented program has as its strong point a very close communication with a given set of people. The practitioner knows his students; often he has had or develops a close and longstanding relationship with them. He has their trust. He understands how they think and knows how they like to learn. On the minus side, this close relationship, by its very nature, limits the number of persons who can be served by the program. In addition, the program may become a captive of the client group unless an unusual degree of educational leadership is exercised by the practitioner." He further states that, "An issue-oriented program allows the practitioner to probe deeply into the issue and to develop a detailed knowledge and understanding of the problem. He may become an expert in the field of knowledge on which the issue cycle depends. He reaches large numbers of diverse people and groups. His main problems are to protect his reputation for objectivity, to deal effectively with action-oriented groups when he is education minded and to reach a constantly changing audience, all or part of which may be new to him."

Gratto also defines different roles for the Extension educator and how he or she intervenes in the cycle. He defines the specialist's role as "The professional views himself as having a main or even total obligation to his subject matter area. His other skills are secondary and are developed only as they are needed to promote his subject matter interests." The specialist-teacher role that he defines involves "Much attention given to the maintenance of a high degree of professional skill, but a substantial portion of the specialist's time is also given over to teaching methods."

He defines a teacher-specialist role in which subject matter competence is secondary to the strong professional interest in educational methods. Finally, a teacher-resource broker role involves learning a problem solving process as a major component, while secondary is obtaining resources that will help within the process.

Finally, there is the role of teacher only where process is the exclusive concern. This involves competence in helping groups understand themselves and thus become more effective. As pointed out by Gratto, "Programs will vary according to: 1) the particular issue cycle chosen, 2) the client group chosen, and 3) the perception of the specialist's role . . ." Gratto feels that the most effective use of the Extension educator can be done within the issue cycle from concerns through alternatives and back to concerns.

Expanding Public Policy Education

Jim Shaffer has provided us with some very useful insights on expanding public policy education within our existing Extension organization.[2] One is adding a public policy dimension to educational activities already being conducted within the total Extension framework. For example, a discussion of food safety could raise the fundamental issue of the appropriate role of government in regard to consumer protection. The idea of opportunity costs could be introduced, i.e., what is given up to obtain a given level of consumer protection? Then, facts about the added costs of implementing a consumer protection rule can be introduced together with the possible benefits. Information regarding the relationship of government inflation policy and its impact on food prices could be included. Questions regarding present agriculture policies as they affect total food supplies, food prices and food available for reserves could be discussed. These could be placed in a benefit/cost framework relevant not only for the U.S. consumer but for consumers worldwide.

This complementary approach to public policy education would improve the awareness of the issues by nontraditional audiences.

It also would make some contribution to understanding the nature of the issues, appropriate analytical concepts associated with them and the framework within which decisions striving towards solutions would be made.

Many Extension educators are community leaders in their own right and contribute to the understanding of many public policy issues within the community. It would be relatively easy for them to extend their activities in the public policy arena, enhancing Extension's image as an important information resource on public policy issues.

Dialogue in itself is important in developing understanding and consensus relative to policy issues. In communities which lack the organization to facilitate effective dialogue on public problems and issues, Extension personnel could deliberately institute periodic information exchange meetings among heads of the public service agencies. Educational television also may provide some opportunities in this regard. Just getting concerned people within the community together to discuss a common problem often contributes significantly to its solution.

Initiation by Extension educators of study groups organized to deal with a range of public issues is another alternative. Such groups might appropriately concentrate upon the function and performance of county governments, problems of the elderly, issues of providing adequate public services, issues of consumer protection or the identification of community needs. Special consideration in the selection of the mix of participants to insure representation of all ages, races, economic levels, social groups and others involved is critical to the success of such groups.

People who find themselves elected to public positions often are not only in the unique position to make decisions, but also need information concerning the decisions which they have to make. Working directly with public officials in defining policy alternatives may be particularly beneficial to them as well as important in building a support base for Extension. Training new county commissioners, holding workshops for township officials and consulting or being available for consultation to individual public boards in the policy process could make a major contribution to improving public decision making in a given community.

Finally, educational programs designed to address the importance of citizen participation in the maintenance of democratic decision making are extremely important. Such educational programs can alert citizens to emerging issues about which they can be doing some systematic thinking. Other programs might be designed to train them to be more effective in participating in the political process at the local, state and national levels. Facilitating interaction between elected officials and interested citizen groups often can contribute to the effectiveness of public decision making. These are a few ways that Extension public policy education can be expanded.

Training for Public Policy Extension Work

Formal academic training useful for careers in public policy education can begin at the undergraduate level, be reinforced in graduate training, be supplemented with pre-service training and continued with inservice training throughout a career. Courses in economics, sociology, philosophy, psychology and political science are especially valuable. Academic training provides students with analytical, action and evaluative models for problem solving. Such training by itself does not necessarily provide the application skills for program development in public policy education. Such skills can be acquired through inservice training and experience.

Examples of inservice training are:

- working with experienced public policy specialists
- participating in special training programs
- attending National Public Policy Education Conferences and regional public policy education committee meetings
- participating in special workshops, such as the recent North Central Coping-With-Conflict Workshop, the Western Policy Education Workshop and the Michigan PACE Program
- enrolling in the policy course at the Extension Winter School

Finally, we must recognize that the Cooperative Extension field staff are a vital element in any public policy program. County agents work closely with local people and interpret their felt needs. They become skilled in adapting relevant information to specific problems. They can interpret needs to specialists. They can draw upon campus faculty and other university resources to provide important information needed by the people of their area or county to solve a local, state or national issue. The Western Policy Education project and the Michigan Affairs Community Education Project have amply demonstrated that Extension field staff can become effective public policy educators with training in the appropriate methodology regardless of their basic disciplines. Further, these projects have shown that field staff get a tremendous personal reinforcement in working in the public policy area.

In summary, the need for effective educators is constantly growing as society's problems become more complex and the nation moves into a political situation where representative government is being seriously threatened by well financed, well prepared, articulate private and public interest groups. Because of the inherent slowness of the decision making process in a democracy, public policy education of the anticipatory type can facilitate the decision process by helping citizens become more effective in solving public problems by developing:

1. interest in public problems

2. ability to analyze problems

3. understanding of the proposed alternatives

4. ability to use principles and factual information to predict probable consequences of alternatives

5. confidence and willingness to decide and act together in support of preferred proposals

6. concern for interests present in the public arena

Extension public policy educators can contribute significantly toward this goal.

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EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAMS

Representatives from four states shared various aspects of successful public policy programs with the group. Vermont showed a 20-minute slide presentation illustrating issue identification and clarification in the field of housing. New York offered a glimpse of skills and techniques used to run a consumer sounding board. Massachusetts shared insights of methods and strategy with its small and part-time farming program, while New Hampshire explained the results of its Food Policy Project.

A summary of each of these ventures into public policy follows.

An Example To Show
ISSUE IDENTIFICATION
AND CLARIFICATION

Housing In Your Community Is In Your Hands

presented by Malcolm I. Bevins, Extension Economist
Louellen Wasson, County Extension Agent
Noah Thompson, Area Resource Development Agent
University of Vermont

The purpose of this slide presentation was to alert residents of Vermont's fastest growing county to a current and potentially explosive public policy issue -- an acute housing shortage.

Since the subject crossed several disciplines the home economist assembled a group of specialists to pool their talents and investigate all facets of the issue. The core of the program was developed around home economics education, community and rural development and resource economics.

A media specialist, involved as a consultant, coordinated the endeavor. Slides were prepared to illustrate specific issues emphasized in the script. Background music, the recorded script and the slides were mixed and synchronized into a 25-minute program.

Results

The total effort represents the achievement of a goal which is vitally important to the success of Extension programs -- cooperation among disciplines. The original education program trained housing leaders from Extension Homemaker clubs in Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties. These leaders then presented the information in their communities. Handout materials from Extension, the Regional Planning Commission and the Vermont State Housing Authority provided supportive data about the towns in the counties.

Recommendations for Use

We feel the slide-tape program can be used in a variety of ways:

- as a forerunner to a program on one of the specific issues raised
- for education of county and town leaders
- as a consciousness raising tool for service clubs
- in high school and college classrooms as an information documentary about the future of the community

An Example To Show
SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

Consumer Sounding Boards in Nassau County, NY

presented by Kathleen Rau
Cooperative Extension Agent
Cornell University

Background

I have been the administrative sponsor for the Nassau County Consumer Sounding Board since its inception in 1975. ANSI (American National Standards Institute) is the organizer of this system that involves consumers in the standards development process. There are 12 Sounding Boards in the United States -- and the consumers who offer their time and experience to "sound" (voice opinions) on topics are volunteers who insure that the consumer's view is included as standards are developed.

The standards being developed have national impact -- most of us take standards for granted. Our CSB (Consumer Sounding Board) has had input into standards for child-resistant packaging, home playground equipment, ladders and care labels.

The booklet "ANSI and the Consumer" (available from ANSI, 1430 Broadway, NY, NY 10018) describes the CSB system in detail.

Currently our office has had to phase out this program due to budget cuts and a decrease in staff. Even so this program has impact that's national in scope.

Skills and Techniques

These are some of the skills and techniques that have worked with our Consumer Sounding Board.

1. Enthusiasm and a basic belief in the system. I believe that the consumers who attend (usually 15 to 20 per meeting) make an important input into standards that directly or indirectly touch our lives daily. I am enthusiastic about their willingness to take time to "sound" on a topic.

2. Build interest. When I send a meeting notice, I list questions for them to think about before they come. They are then mentally ready to discuss the topic. I also encourage them to ask their friends the questions and bring these responses to the meeting. They often voice views of others.

3. Establish a friendly atmosphere. I start the meeting on time with coffee and tea or refreshments if possible. The members can talk informally with each other. This then encourages them to speak up at the meeting. A friendly, accepting atmosphere is a must because I want all views expressed on the subject.

4. Keep organizational details at a minimum. Behind the scenes I do much preparation, but the group is not aware of it, except that the meetings run smoothly. I make sure that the technical person is on time, minutes are taken, samples available, new members recruited, room set up so chairs are arranged in a circle. The topic of discussion is written on the blackboard. I also keep addresses of participants, their attendance and send a discussion summary to ANSI.

5. Build visability continually. The information discussed at our "sounding" does not just benefit the members. The invitation extended to the local newspaper editor to attend was accepted and we get excellent photographic coverage. The consumers who attend really feel important -- having a newspaper confirm it really helps! Meeting notices are included in our home economics newsletter and when I was working on Channel 21 News, a summary of the "sounding" was included.

6. Link up with the top organization. I was a very active member of a CSB committee that ANSI sponsored. It was a great opportunity to compare the success and failure with other administrative sponsors.

We were able to share ideas and as a group made some recommendations that became a reality -- a short slide presentation, a newsletter, membership cards and press releases. I also was asked to review a leaflet that would be used to encourage ANSI standard writing committees to use our CSB groups. This would mean that my CSB group would receive more requests to "sound" on topics.

7. Remind everyone of her role. Each "sounding" has a flip chart to set the tone of the meeting. I explain the reason why we are here, what the goals of the Consumer Sounding Board are, who is the "consumer" and what the role of the resource technical person is. The chart is always handy to keep the meeting on the right track. I then can use it to get back to the subject at hand. I remind all the members that their views are most important in the development of the standard being discussed.

8. Keep the meeting running on a positive note. The discussions are ongoing and I encourage all to participate. I summarize as well as move along and keep notes of what thoughts or decisions the group has made. When the group is not interested, I move forward. At the end of the meeting, I summarize the highlights to be sure I've correctly recorded the information. Consensus may or may not be used.

9. Promote membership. I always encourage new membership. To keep current members interested, I keep a log describing "soundings" with followup articles from newspapers as well as pictures that I've taken.

10. Encourage wider participation of members. Because our Consumer Sounding Board is located close to New York City, we were asked to bring our group for a "demonstration" sounding. This I welcomed as an idea because it gave a wider endorsement of the CSB to the group. The members can realize their importance to the development of standards in a big way. These opportunities are great experiences for our members. This thought kept my spirits high when details of getting the group into the city and moderating the session got me down. Our group "sounded" before the ANSI Consumer Council; the Editor-Industry Seminar sponsored by AHAM, and an International Standards Organization meeting where their comments were translated into French. In addition two of the members participated as consumers on a UL Technical Advisory group.

An Example To Show
METHOD AND STRATEGY

Small and Part-time Farming

presented by Richard G. Floyd, Jr.
Community Development Coordinator
University of Massachusetts

The small and part-time farming programs fostered by Cooperative Extension Service in Massachusetts are designed to provide a variety of educational services to this element of the farming community. Most of the activity is grassroots, an outgrowth of the Northeast Small Farm Conference sponsored by USDA, CSA and ACTION in the fall of 1978. At that time, small farmers from throughout the Northeast were brought together and asked to identify what they perceived to be their major problems and what they would propose by way of solutions. The Conference, one of several across the nation, was a substantial success and has lead to ongoing activity in the area of small-scale agriculture.

Other elements of the small farms activities are in place because Cooperative Extension, through its own initiative, has been placing greater emphasis on programs to support smaller agricultural operations.

These two approaches have provided a basis for a variety of educational programs designed to address the multiplicity of needs of the small/part-time farmer. Specifically they allow for:

1. A proven Extension approach. Educational programs and services are designed to get practical information to an audience which can use it. Tri-State Small Farms Program is an informal educational program in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island which provides "traditional" Extension services to small/part-time farming client groups.

2. Organization and communication. We foster the ongoing development of the State Rural Development Committees which are composed of representatives from agencies, organizations and the general public who have an interest and/or impact on rural areas. Committees work to provide a forum for communication and discussion of rural issues. They seek to assist in the development of awareness and the determining and carrying out of policy and programs that impact on rural areas.

Cooperative Extension established the Center for Rural Communities which serves as a focal point for activities that are identified as having an impact on rural communities and brings together those with interests in small farms, part-time farming and community resource development. We also have in operation a resource center to collect, catalogue and make available educational materials which pertain to rural issues -- with emphasis on small/part-time farming.

3. Small Farm Advocacy Project. This project is an outgrowth of the Northeast Small Farm Conference, a unique combination of private, nonprofit and public agency involvement. The New England Small Farmer Project, covering all the New England states, is staffed by VISTA volunteers who serve as information and technical assistance resources for farmers. Their charge is to help in the development of a network of farmers and decision makers who will have the capacity to affect political action through the Small Farm Subcommittee of the Rural Development Committee in each state. Other program goals include working together to create the basis for local constituencies which can influence political decisions (land use, credit, taxation) and stimulating local action (such as establishment of cooperative markets and community support). Cooperative Extension is working in concert with this effort by having a full time small farm/rural development specialist who works with agency people and the Small Farms Project staff in carrying out the objectives of the program.

Each of the above strategies contributes in a unique way to the overall effort being directed at assisting the small and part-time farming community in the Northeast. In addition, the strategies work to support and utilize the established agricultural, material and human resources of the region.

An Example To Show
RESULTS

The New Hampshire Food Policy Project

presented by Gerry Howe, CRD Agent
University of New Hampshire

The New Hampshire Food Policy Project was a comprehensive approach to issue identification and resolution, and it represented a new role for Cooperative Extension in New Hampshire. Food Policy was identified as an "umbrella" issue that involved all program areas of the Extension Service.

The first job in Food Policy was research. We had to determine where we (New Hampshire) were, how we got there and where we were headed. This took approximately one year. Occurring simultaneously was the identification, statewide, of groups, individuals, agencies and organizations who were involved or interested in some phase of food policy. Upon completion of the research and identification phase, Cooperative Extension convened the first meeting to determine the need for and the commitment to the formation of a coalition to work on a Food Policy for the State of New Hampshire.

There was an overwhelming consensus of the 14 organizations represented that Food Policy was an important issue.

They were committed to actively work on that issue. The Extension Service was formally charged with the chair at that meeting as well as its traditional research and education responsibilities. The Ad Hoc group that formed the New Hampshire Food Policy Study Committee met for about a year and a half. During this time the membership expanded and contracted as issues and interests evolved. The committee identified six primary subjective components of Food Policy: consumer needs, land use, agricultural production, food processing and storage, transportation and marketing. Subcommittees were formed to deal with these components.

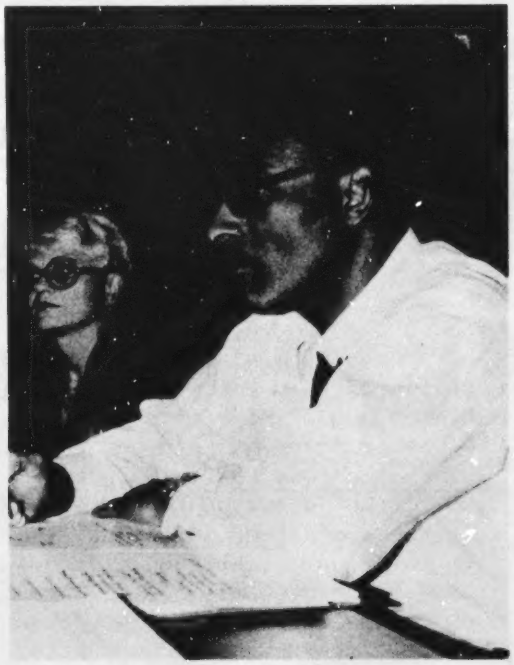
Each subcommittee developed a situation statement, goals and objectives associated with the component issue. These subcommittee reports became the document Recommendations for a New Hampshire Food Policy which was published by the Cooperative Extension Service. At the time this process was occurring, public information meetings were being held across the state to inform and stimulate the general public in the area of Food Policy. Also occurring was the preparation of legislation to resolve some situations that were identified as problems. This was not done by the Extension Service, but information generated by the research served as a justification and rationale for the legislation.

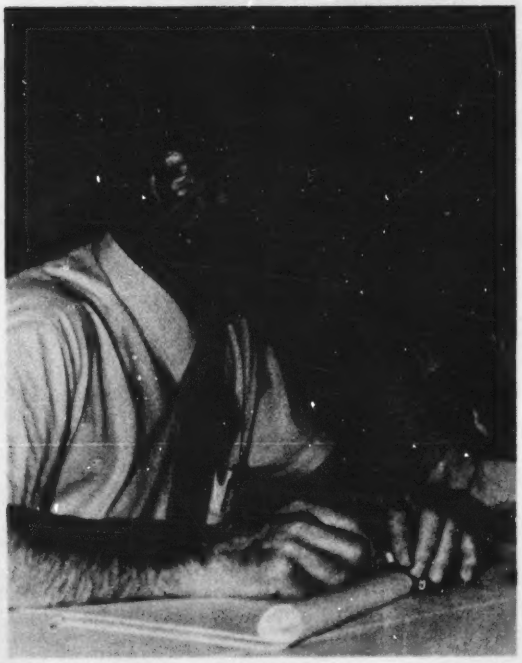
One piece of legislation, HCR 13, directed the Governor to develop a Food Policy for the State of New Hampshire. This was passed by the House and Senate and sent to the Governor's office. The Governor then endorsed the publication Recommendations for a New Hampshire Food Policy and called a Governor's Conference on Food Policy to determine future directions and further educate the public. At the same time, additional legislation, HB 153, was passed. This legislation established a structure to administer and authorize a bond issue of 3 million dollars for the purchase of development rights on agricultural land. The passage of this bill indicated that the legislature now was educated to the need for New Hampshire to take steps to protect and develop its agricultural production potential and associated resources. These were the tangible results of the Food Policy effort.

There were, however, intangible results that over time will manifest themselves in tangible action:

- Public awareness of the food system in New Hampshire.
- The role that the individual can play in promoting and participating in New Hampshire agriculture.
- Legislative recognition of agriculture as an important industry in New Hampshire.
- Awareness of the limited land resource available for agricultural production.

- An active coalition advocating New Hampshire agriculture and related issues.
- Public visibility of the Cooperative Extension Service in areas previously not identified as Extension arenas.
- A coalescing of Extension energy and resources into an area of public policy that involves all program areas.
- Confidence by the Extension Service that it can deal with political issues.





ISSUE STUDY GROUPS

Program participants joined one of five discussion groups in which they were to review the assigned readings and conference presentations, discuss their interests in the issue and develop an educational program based on that issue and the content of the conference thus far. The subjects for the study groups had been determined by comments on interest sheets filled out by participants prior to the conference.

The five topics were Energy, Housing, Citizen Participation, Land Use and Family Related Public Policy Issues. Delegates could select whichever topic interested them most. The following write-ups include the issue selected within the topic, problems encountered by the group in developing that issue and the plan devised for involving citizens in the issue.

HOUSING

Issue Selected

Increasing available supply of standard housing for low income people in Chittenden County, VT.

Problems Encountered

Much time was spent discussing whether the issue selected was indeed public policy, for the group was still clarifying the definition of public policy in concrete terms of issues. Many hadn't settled in their own minds the relation of public policy and community resource development. Because so much time was spent discussing whether or not to find a hypothetical situation, the final solution received less thought than perhaps it should have. Another problem encountered was defining such terms as "standard" in relation to housing.

Plans for Involving Citizens

Cooperative Extension would survey interested groups to identify various views, levels of awareness, levels of interest in further examination of issue. After consulting Extension personnel at local and state levels, Extension would organize a meeting.

One representative from all interested groups would attend the meeting. Major discussion would be on low income housing and its need in the county. (There is no county government in Vermont to affect this problem.) If the group decides housing is a problem, Cooperative Extension would move from the position of organizer of the meeting to that of facilitator. At two subsequent meetings, the group would set priorities, recognize various alternatives and establish research needs.

Then they would work in sub-units on various aspects of the problem including sites and types of housing. To present the findings to the county population, members of the discussion group would report back to their various organizations. Following feedback, goals and actions of the housing group would be determined.

FAMILY RELATED PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Issue Selected

Lack of parenting skills in school-aged parents.

Problems Encountered

While the large size of this group could have proven unwieldy, input from the observer and facilitator moved discussion well. By using brainstorming techniques, everyone had input which did produce some long involved discussion. There was some reluctance, but an eventual general agreement, to narrow the problem to a workable issue, one on which the community could have impact.

Plans for Involving Citizens

Cooperative Extension first gathers relevant data reflecting local, state and national trends on this issue including frequency of teenaged pregnancy, profile of youth involved, consequences for the community, available resources and linkages among resources. This information can be shared with people who could assist with these efforts. This would produce a base group to explore available alternatives and implications. The group would develop a program approach to the issue providing the public with knowledge for decision making at meetings, with the media and through agencies.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Issue Selected

How citizens can influence decision making, with the example of exploring a proposed dam in a county.

Problems Encountered

Three problems surfaced in the group which effected discussion outcome. One was the feeling that it was hard to encourage citizen participation without a problem to tie the educational program to. A second was that the group members themselves weren't committed to the amount of time necessary to thrash out a solution. The third was that the group became "stuck" using the meeting format as the only educational tool when other methods may have been appropriate.

Plans for Involving Citizens

After verifying conditions, Cooperative Extension would talk with disgruntled citizens and suggest a meeting with others involved to assess the situation. Key actors would be identified and invited to Meeting I.

Pre-meeting homework for Meeting I would include preparing agenda, briefing participants on purpose of meeting, preparing "natural/logical" leadership should someone surface. At Meeting I we'd define CE's role, and the group would define the problem and the role of the committee (ongoing, ad hoc). The group would suggest alternatives, vent steam and get volunteers to work on short-term tasks to help answer questions about the project.

CE's homework for Meeting II would be to contact resource people, prepare agenda, confer with media contacts. At the meeting where CE serves as moderator, the resource people would present factual information on the problem. The group would reassess the problem and alternatives examining the impacts of alternatives and identifying needs for more information. The entire group would make suggestions for content of Meeting III.

CE's homework for Meeting III consists of contacting new resource people, conferring with media, conferring with committee members to get their evaluation and preparing the agenda. At this meeting, we will hear more facts and get more reassessment of problems and alternatives. A general chairperson would be selected, and a study group would be set up to review the information and recommend an alternative.

Meeting IV, now run by a non-Extension chair, would see CE recap the process the group has followed in decision making. From then on, Cooperative Extension would provide a consulting role regarding strategies and resources.

ENERGY

Issue Selected

How to maintain present school transportation costs in view of rising prices and decreasing fuel supplies.

Problems Encountered

The group tried to tackle too big a problem at first considering the aspect of "transportation" in general. It took time to refine this to an issue which would affect a local community and one on which they could have an impact.

Plans for Involving Citizens

The Extension representative and the school board, which had requested help, identified 12 groups concerned with the issue of school transportation. From these groups, leaders were identified and invited to attend an advisory board meeting to which they'd bring their group's list of concerns, alternatives, solutions and consequences of the issue.

At the second advisory board meeting, the group would set priorities for the alternatives in light of the consequences. The alternative suggestions then would go to the school board which would develop a basic plan or alternative plans.

Then the advisory board would react to this plan or plans and the board would reevaluate, finalize and present a plan to the group.

Mass media coverage of the issue would be invited. The reporters assigned would be kept appraised of the investigations.

LAND USE

Issue Selected

Should X County develop a growth plan?

Problems Encountered

Because each individual presented a subject for a case study, the group got hung up on whether to define a community goal or a Cooperative Extension educational goal. There also was confusion over the difference between goals and objectives. When these hurdles were overcome, the content development proceeded rapidly.

Plans for Involving Citizens

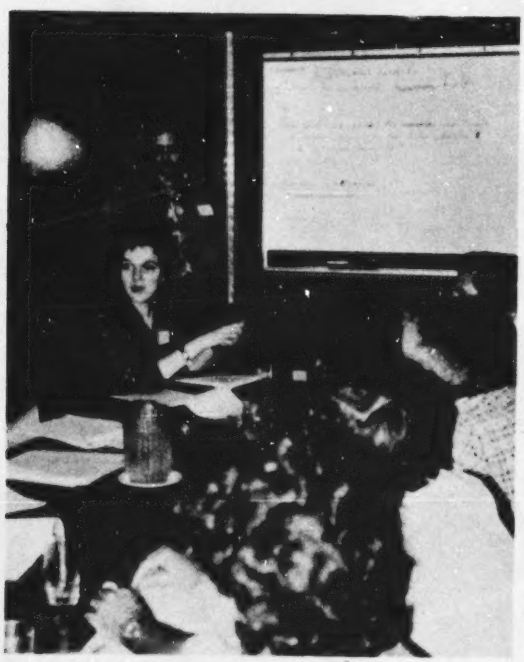
To recruit for a planning committee, Extension would contact various agencies for representation. At the same time CE would develop an instrument to pretest desires of citizens on life quality.

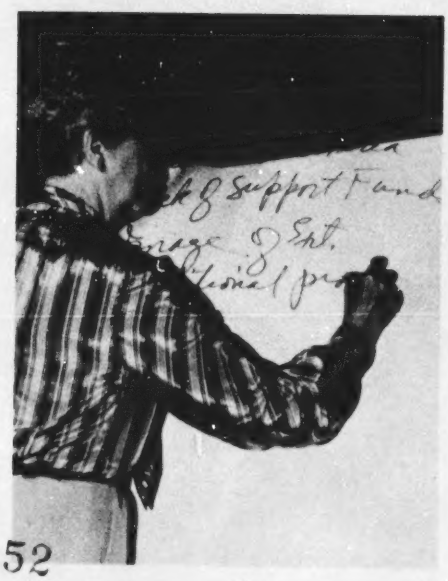
Sub-committees would be established to gather data and adapt the pretest to their constituencies. Extension would work with the sub-committee which would report back to the original planning group.

Conflicts will surface as the larger group identifies alternate solutions.

Various means of disseminating the findings include use of cable TV, coffee klatches for other community leaders, local newspaper coverage including a Sunday supplement, schools through an essay contest and preparation of information sheets.

The final test evaluating the public policy education program will be how many vote on the issue on Election Day. The pretest results would serve as the base line attitudinal level with a post-test taken by random telephone survey.





OBSERVER REFLECTIONS

J. B. Wyckoff

As I suggested in my introductory paper to this conference, the most difficult problem in the public policy methodology is the definition of the issue around which the educational program is to be built. This was painfully obvious yesterday in the struggle which the small groups had in defining the issue to be dealt with within the policy education program. The basic problem is that most of you still have a tendency to define the educational needs by giving an answer. This is not the methodology that is useful in dealing with public policy education.

The second problem, which was also obvious yesterday, is the tendency to confuse the goals of the citizens in solving their policy problems with the educational goals of the public policy education program. Until this was sorted out, very few of the groups made much progress towards developing the public policy education program. One of the major concerns that has been expressed by the agents at the meeting today is their perception of how their clientele will perceive them if they become involved in public policy methodology type programs. While they feel very comfortable with the "you have problem, I have answer" format, they do not feel comfortable with the application of the methodology where they do not give answers. Further:

1. If the program is issue oriented, the audience, by and large, will be new to the Extension educator.

2. If the program is client oriented, the Extension specialists will be broadening their audience's understanding of both you as an educator and Extension as an educational system.

3. As an "answer giver," you must realize that in dealing with policy issues, only the "Great White Father" in Washington, DC has all of the answers.

4. The perception by the Extension specialists is that public policy education is "too subjective" Compared to what? To giving prescriptions and answers?

It is probably not viewed that way by your clientele, that is, IF you stick to public policy education methodology. In this case, the audience will perceive that you have indeed helped them formulate a rational, intelligent, informed decision for which they ultimately must bear the responsibility. Thus, they do not perceive that you should be making the decision for them.

5. The specialists' perceived self-interest, as affected by the lack of direct reinforcement by a) their peers, b) administrators, c) the long-term versus short-term payoffs within the Extension educational system itself again may not be correct. Nothing pays off for Extension personnel like successful programs that are communicated back by the audiences. Successful public policy education programs tend to stimulate this type of response.

Many of you still have a concern about Extension's role in public policy education. If Extension's role is as it was defined earlier "to improve human welfare by education," then Extension's role in public policy education is to "improve human welfare via education which facilitates more effective participation in public decisions which affect peoples' lives." This is done using public policy methodology.

Developing Programs

The question has been raised relative to the way Extension programs in public policy are developed. Why should the program development in public policy be different than program development in any other Extension educational area? If the program development procedure works for other areas, it will work just as well for public policy education.

The question also has been raised as to what skills are needed in public policy education. It seems to me that the same teaching skills that are essential in other Extension education programs also are essential here. The major difference is that the teacher in a public policy context does not become an advocate of any position. Other than that, the skills in communication, group dynamics, preparation and delivery of the educational product should be the same.

I will leave you with one final caveat relative to public policy education programs versus traditional Extension education programs, that is, DON'T LAY IT ON THEM -- LAY IT OUT FOR THEM.

OBSERVER REFLECTIONS

Jim Hildreth

I guess I'm next and as usual I am going to disagree with my esteemed colleague. Yet I'm also going to agree with him. The perception that Extension workers often have of themselves is that we provide answers for people to solve their problems. That I'm going to agree with. I'm going to disagree with "providing answers" as the only role.

In no case did the groups in this workshop say that Extension would provide the answers to the problems. In most cases you developed a process within a county for the answers to be determined within the advisory committee or process. OK, so I think we've come a ways. Now it may appear I'm reversing my field. But I don't think that I am and we can argue about it later. I still argue that public policy and CRD are very similar, but there are some differences. I want to point out a difference.

CRD and Local Government

When you are dealing with CRD, you are dealing within the local community and there is not an overall government for the local community. You don't have overall decision processes, you have many of them. You are well aware of that. Now, because of this lack of an overall unit to make the decisions, CRD has developed the importance of a process for arriving at consensus.

Perhaps I oversimplified when I responded earlier to a question about the difference between CRD and public policy. I responded by saying they are similar and who cares about the differences? One minor difference is that in public policy we maximize information and knowledge and understanding, not consensus. Because if you have defined a public policy issue well, there is a political decision unit which can deal with the issue and arrive at a consensus. In most public policy issues, you do not have to try and maximize or worry a great deal about consensus. You let the political process deal with arriving at consensus.

Presenting Information

Now I would like to make a number of small but important points. At least I think they are. One point I want to repeat. Public policy, as Jean has well pointed out, looks at alternatives and consequences. I still would raise the question that for traditional educational roles -- how to can pickles or how much fertilizer to put on a field -- the alternatives and consequences approach is a useful way to present the information. Another point I would raise is the role of information. Some of the groups in this workshop were developing information. That is a very important part of public policy education. You are dealing with important things and you cannot go in there with half-cocked knowledge, you have to have knowledge.

Fear of Failure

Another issue it seems to me that has come up in the course of this conference is the fear of failure in doing public policy education. A statistics course I took once taught me about two types of errors. There is Type A error which is to act -- such as proceeding with public policy education and failing. Then there is Type B error which is not to do any public policy education and have the citizens perceive that you cannot deal with hard and significant issues, but only with those issues that aren't significant.

My last point is sort of emotional. How do you tell what are significant issues? There are a lot of them. Torlief Aasheim who retired a few years ago as Extension Director in Montana gave me an answer to that. He says that Extension ought to be about those things that make grown men and women cry.

QUESTIONS FOR WYCKOFF AND HILDRETH

Q. Can Extension be used by groups to foster their own views on public policy issues?

A. Hildreth: If Extension decides to work on an issue, it needs to develop a set of alternatives including one the group isn't in favor of. The group may get what it deserves! You must maintain your objectivity. Include higher levels of government on the list of alternatives. Sometimes you'll just have to say no to avoid being used.

Wyckoff: Let me give you an example. In Oregon we have a State Land Use Planning Law for which Extension was asked to educate the people, actually to sell the law. Extension felt it should accept the issue, but kept that staff separate from the regular staff. I might add that we lost three excellent agents who resigned from Extension as a result of this effort. It was not a good experience. We should stick to "straight education."

Q. With one issue groups, it's harder to reach consensus. Will we have problems in public policy as one issue groups proliferate?

A. Wyckoff: Public policy education is one major way to fight one issue groups by illustrating the tradeoffs involved. Try to keep issues as broad as possible.

Hildreth: There's only one way to deal with a single issue group and that's on a broad base with large numbers of people receiving the information. The reason CRD has had to use the consensus process is because many problems at the local level have no governmental decision entity. In most of the public policy issues, which occur mainly at national and state levels, there is a decision entity, and the rules of the game are already developed. The process of doing CRD and public policy are essentially the same.

Wyckoff: We have a disagreement in definition. I see public policy as dealing with the decision framework, i.e. the rules by which the game is played. CRD is helping people effectively play the game. Within the rules set by policy, CRD programs can be appropriately carried out at all levels of public decision -- local, state or national.

Q. Do you see Extension expanding research on alternative solutions for public policy problems?

A. Hildreth: Yes. The average citizen doesn't know or care about the difference between Extension and research. You are scholars, too, and should think of yourselves as such.

Q. Do you think Extension should certify agents who work in public policy?

A. Hildreth: What certification gives is monopoly power and we don't need that. Extension is good enough already.

THERE'S NO ORGANIZATION MORE EFFECTIVE than Extension in hammering out consensus, but we don't do as well in "winner take all."

. . . Gene McMurtry

McMURTRY CALLS FOR

COMPROMISE, CONSENT

Out of the conflict that may arise in public policy issues can come compromise and consent, Gene McMurtry, Associate Director of the Massachusetts Cooperative Extension Service, told conference delegates at the last general session. In giving the wrapup and marching orders he said, "Extension agents can be influential as long as you have empathy towards and work with all kinds of people."

He pointed out that timeliness is especially important in doing public policy, that there is a right time and a right issue. "Timeliness is especially important to audiences and to power clusters." One way to be sure of being timely, according to Gene, is to develop a "high listening IQ" as far as public policy is concerned. "Keep careful track of issues in the local newspapers and clip items related to public policy. You'll be surprised at the themes that emerge."

Problem of Objectivity

While Gene thought it impossible to be really objective, he suggested that conference delegates try to be. He cautioned that even the way an agenda is put together can be a bias.

He emphasized the importance of bringing the 20-35 year old group into public policy discussion to develop leadership, while cautioning the delegates to conduct educational programs in the language of the people concerned with the problem.

He suggested that too often a county staff determines what issues it will work on based on staff experience. He pleaded with the agents to look further and involve other research people from outside Extension boundaries.

State Staff Pointers

Gene left some pointers for state staff to ponder also. He asked them to listen to the agents to find out what is going on in the counties.

The specialist needs to know what's going on in the minds and hearts of the agents and to change his or her way of doing things if that is needed to answer the counties' problems.

"Extension clients are volunteers and may drop out of the market if we don't deliver," Gene reminded the group. He felt that Extension was the most effective group for hammering out a consensus. But, he said, "Extension doesn't do as well in the 'winner take all' situation. We need to look at issues that are subject to scientific analysis. And we need to find more allies to help with the research." All this will take more effort on both the county and state levels, he pointed out.

Above all, Gene said, remember that power clusters are generally fragile so be willing to talk and work with many groups on how to get resources for a community. The more you can "talk eyeball to eyeball" with people in the power clusters, the better, he said. "But be sure to have your information well organized. If you do, Extension can be influential."

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and Cecelia Roland, Cornell University

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CONFERENCE EVALUATION

The summarization of the conference evaluation will assist committees setting up similar or follow-up meetings. It drew responses from 49 participants, the majority of whom rated their knowledge gained on the higher end of the scale. In the following summary, 5 stands for the highest rating, 1 for the lowest. Not everyone answered every question.

	Ratings				
	5	4	3	2	1
I know more about public policy education.	13	26	10	0	0
I can recognize a public policy issue and understand what a related Extension program should accomplish.	7	27	14	1	0
I understand the criteria for appropriate Extension involvement in a public policy issue.	9	25	15	0	0
I know more about how to program for public policy education.	6	23	16	3	0
I know where to find resource people who can provide information or assistance in program design, development and delivery on public policy issues.	6	23	12	5	3
I will be able to add or improve a public policy component in my current programs.	8	23	11	1	0
I am willing to work with other professionals to replicate or modify this workshop format for selected audiences in the state in 1980.	21	16	7	2	2
The workshop gave me access to an educational framework and information to which I normally do not have access.	18	17	11	1	2
The workshop setting, arrangements and agenda allowed for adequate interaction and dialogue.	20	20	7	1	1
The workshop instructional staff was effective (overall).	20	16	2	1	0

† 59 deleted - non captioned photos

PUBLICATIONS OF THE NORTHEAST REGIONAL CENTER FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Publication

Publications 1, 2 and 3, Outdated and supply depleted

4. *Papers — Workshop on Evaluating State Title V Pilot Programs in the Northeast, October 29-31, 1974. January 1975.*
5. *The Proceedings of the Conference on Rural Land-Use Policy in the Northeast, October 2-4, 1974. February 1975.*
6. *Supply depleted.*
7. *State Land-Use Laws in the Northeast: A Compendium and Classification of Selected Statutes. By Leslie C. Hyde. April 1975.*
8. *Evaluating Impacts of Economic Growth Proposals: An Analytical Framework for Use With Community Decision-Makers. April 1975.*
9. *Report on the Property Research Workshop, June 25-28, 1975. Prepared by Dale Colyer, West Virginia University. January 1976.*
10. *Priorities in Community Services Research for the Northeast: A Report of the ad hoc Committee on Community Services, January 1976.*
11. *An Approach to Evaluation of Rural Development Act Title V Programs. By Robert W. Miller, West Virginia University, February 1976.*
12. *Rural Land Use — Problems & Possibilities. A series of eight pamphlets on land use control in rural areas. By the Land-Use Subcommittee of the Northeast Extension Public Policy Committee. September 1976. Thirty dollars per hundred packets. (Minimum-one hundred).*
13. *Priorities in Economic Development Research for the Northeast: A Report of the ad hoc Committee on Economic Development. April 1977.*
14. *The Proceedings of the Workshop on Rural Gerontology Research in the Northeast, May 24-27, 1977. July 1978.*
15. *Housing for Rural People in the Northeast: A Research Agenda, A Report of the ad hoc Committee on Rural Housing Research. July 1978. 22 pp.*
16. *Educational Materials for Community Resource Development: An Annotated Bibliography for Extension Professionals. Edited by John S. Reaves. September 1978. 113 pp.*
17. *Energy for Local Government: Extending Energy Resources. Proceedings of Owego Conference (March 4, 1978). April 1979. 80 pp.*
18. *Proceedings of Northeast States Conference on Educational Programs for Local Government, May 8-9, 1979. Forthcoming.*

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Programs of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development are available without regard to race, color, religion, sex or national origin.